

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Ford Madox Ford
The Good Soldier

THE
COMPLETE
CLASSICS

UNABRIDGED

Read by **Kerry Shale**

CLASSIC
FICTION



NA713212D

	Part 1	
1	Chapter 1	5:19
2	Someone has said that the death of a mouse...	5:51
3	I don't, you understand, blame Florence.	4:32
4	I asked Mrs Ashburnham whether she had told Florence...	4:26
5	Chapter 2	5:34
6	Florence's aunts used to say that I must be the laziest man...	4:07
7	So Pierre Vidal declared himself Emperor of Jerusalem...	4:17
8	He wasn't obtrusive about his heart.	3:24
9	Chapter 3	4:30
10	And, what the devil! For whose benefit did she do it?	4:34
11	His hair was fair, extraordinarily...	4:59
12	So, you see, he would have plenty to gurgle about...	5:42
13	Mrs Ashburnham exhibited at that moment more gait...	3:30
14	I loved Leonora always...	4:10
15	Chapter 4	5:26
16	But these things have to be done...	5:23
17	I fancy his wife's irony did quite alarm poor Teddy...	5:19
18	I suppose I ought to have pitied the poor animal...	4:07
19	And she laid one finger upon Captain Ashburnham's wrist.	3:48
20	Chapter 5	4:48
21	You understand that there was nothing the matter...	5:10

22	No, I cannot help wishing that Florence...	5:31
23	But in boxing Mrs Maidan's ears...	5:32
24	So, of course, for those three years or so...	5:25
25	But Leonora's English Catholic conscience...	5:43
26	And there could not have been anyone better...	4:03
27	As a matter of fact, Maisie's being in Edward's room...	4:35
28	Chapter 6	5:15
29	And, do you know, at the thought...	4:45
30	What had happened on the day of our jaunt...	3:20
31	For the trick was pretty efficiently done.	3:11
	Part 2	
32	Chapter 1	4:13
33	She wanted to marry a gentleman of leisure.	5:23
34	And that evening, when I went to fetch her...	5:48
35	God knows. She was a frightened fool...	5:38
36	You see, that fellow impressed upon me...	5:01
37	As God is my Judge, I do not believe...	4:25
38	Well, Edward Ashburnham was worth having.	3:34
39	Well, anyhow, she chanted Edward's praises...	4:18
40	Chapter 2	4:58
41	Well, I think I have made it pretty clear.	4:29

	Part 3	
42	Chapter 1	5:44
43	So that that was the first knowledge I had...	5:17
44	What had actually happened had been this.	4:45
45	He was very careful to assure me...	4:33
46	I have come to be very much of a cynic in these matters.	5:52
47	And my story was concerning itself with Florence...	4:28
48	But what she didn't want me to know...	3:52
49	I tell you, I had no regret. What had I to regret?	3:57
50	Chapter 2	5:53
51	Once, when she had been about twelve...	5:20
52	They say the poor thing was always allowed...	4:26
53	For Leonora made the girl go to bed at ten...	4:49
54	Chapter 3	5:10
55	That was partly due to the careful...	5:05
56	But as far as he could describe his feelings...	3:34
57	She made tentative efforts at remonstrating with him.	3:33
58	To do both justice...	5:11
59	I don't know why they never had any children...	3:46
60	Leonora could not but be aware...	3:46
61	Chapter 4	5:23
62	A man I didn't know would come up...	5:41

63	He began to indulge in day-dreams...	5:33
64	When the palpitating creature was at last asleep...	3:37
65	He spent a week of madness...	4:35
66	Chapter 5	5:08
67	Leonora then had three thousand a year...	4:34
68	She ascertained that an old gentleman...	4:43
69	Edward was pretty hard hit when Mrs Basil had to go away.	5:19
70	'I propose,' she said, 'that you should resign...'	4:44
71	From the moment of his unfaithfulness...	3:44
72	She had at that period...	3:42
	Part 4	
73	Chapter 1	5:17
74	She saw life as a perpetual sex-battle...	4:47
75	That was really, she said, the happiest moment of her life...	5:38
76	Yes, the mental deterioration that Florence...	4:12
77	Well, Florence would come to Leonora...	4:16
78	Chapter 2	4:33
79	Personally, I wanted to invest the money...	5:16
80	And yet, to me, living in the house...	5:13
81	Perhaps Nancy was the only person...	5:48

82	But all that was doing a great deal of harm....	4:40
83	Yes, Leonora wished to bring her riding-whip...	4:20
84	'If you think,' Leonora said...	3:42
85	The girl was sitting perfectly still in an arm-chair...	3:50
86	Chapter 3	5:23
87	And yet the whole effect of that reading...	4:47
88	You are to remember that all this happened...	5:37
89	Flame then really seemed to fill her body...	4:38
90	Chapter 4	4:13
91	The sounds went on from the hall below...	4:29
92	Chapter 5	5:29
93	Colonel Rufford said the doctor...	5:18
94	For there was a great deal of imbecility...	4:54
95	In the case of Edward and the girl...	5:14
96	Chapter 6	4:56
97	It is, at any rate, certain that Edward's actions...	5:06
98	It is queer the quite fantastic things...	5:36
99	But he was perfectly quiet and he had given up drinking.	5:02
100	Yes, society must go on; it must breed, like rabbits.	5:41

Total time: 7:59:09

Ford Madox Ford

(1873–1939)

The Good Soldier

In his obituary of Ford Madox Ford, Ezra Pound compared his work to that of Homer, saying of the latter's poetry: 'Apart from narrative sense and the main constructive, there is this to be said of Homer, that never can you read half a page without finding melodic invention, still fresh, and that you can hear the actual voices, as of the old men speaking in the surge of the phrases.' There is a deeply poetic element to Ford's *The Good Soldier*, and the narrative truly gives the impression of hearing the actual voices – such as that of the unreliable witness whose character informs the very fashion in which the story is told. It is self-consciously achronological, partly because – as the narrator asserts – that is how one might go about telling such a story, and partly because the author was making various points about the novel, about literature, about the relationships between the book and the reader, between the

author and the narrator, fiction and truth.

Ford Madox Ford was a champion of such methods, not just in his own works but in that of other people. As an editor he promoted the work of the *avant-garde* in literature, the likes of Pound, Eliot, Joyce, Hemingway, Lawrence and Conrad; he also published Wells, Hardy and Galsworthy, who might more readily be seen as belonging to the 19th-century tradition. But Ford was comfortable with both the conventions and the iconoclasm of art. His father had been the music critic for *The Times*, and had championed Wagner as the standard-bearer for the future of music; his maternal grandfather was a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Ford's childhood, although deeply blighted by a sense of inadequacy (his father called him a 'patient but extremely stupid donkey'), was alive to art, artists and the potent capacity of genius.

He was born Ford Hermann Hueffer in Merton, Surrey, to Francis Hueffer, a German who had settled in England four years beforehand, and Catherine Madox Brown. For all the intellectual and artistic stimuli that the household and family would have provided, the death of Ford's father in 1889 left the family with practically no money. As a result Ford, who had started writing fiction, had an astonishing memory and who was fluent in several languages, could not go to university. He was, himself, never good with money, which, combined with his determination to make a living as a writer, meant that he had to elope to marry his intended, Elsie Martindale, as her family were against the match. The couple were deeply attached at first, but within 10 years the marriage had broken down. Elsie and her family refused to allow a formal divorce, and unsuccessfully took Ford to court for maintenance payments. Ford went on to have a series of long relationships with different women, some of which led to public scandals and others to further legal action – Violet Hunt was legally prevented from calling herself his

wife. Such concerns over his status may have led to his changing his name to Ford Madox Ford in 1919.

He had enjoyed early success with fairy tales, and had followed these with poems, more fairy tales, a biography of his grandfather (with whom he lived for a while after his father's death) and literary criticism, beginning a career of almost endless productivity. He wrote some 80 books (novels, historical novels, romances), published several volumes of poetry and perhaps as many as 500 magazine or journal articles, quite apart from his crucial work as a critic and editor of *The English Review* and, later, *The Transatlantic Review*. None of this made him wealthy, though. His stewardship of *The English Review* left it (and him) in financial trouble, and he ended up in court for bankruptcy. But he had become a hub for the new voices of the 20th century, and collaborated with Joseph Conrad, one of the great figures in the transition between the traditional and the Modernist models of the novel.

It is Ford's position as a conduit for transition that marks his works. He was acutely aware of the disintegration of a

set of values by which Britain – England in particular – had lived for years, and of the impact of the newly arriving world on these old and immovable customs. The machine age had already arrived, the industrialisation of the world was underway, and the almost feudal systems that had upheld the previous generations were incapable of coping with the social changes that were imminent and inevitable. *The Good Soldier* is a perfect demonstration of this, and of all Ford's other great strengths; the title alone carries with it layers of irony, subtlety and self-consciousness, as well as having an extra note of fantasy and autobiography (however unreliable).

The irony, subtlety and self-consciousness rest on the notion of a 'good soldier' – someone valiant, fearless, obedient, steadfast; a 20th-century 'parfit, gentil knight'. This description is an ironic comment on the man to whom it is applied in the book, even though he appears to meet the description. Moreover, it is this hanging on to outmoded notions of behavioural niceties that so tragically undermines the central characters'

relationships. That all said, Ford himself suggested that the title was, in itself, ironic – he had originally wanted to call it *The Saddest Story*, but his publisher felt this title unlikely to stir the public. Ford mockingly proposed a few alternatives including *A Roaring Joke* and *The Good Soldier*, and the publisher decided upon the latter (although why a country at war would be more likely to purchase a book with that title is unclear). Ford said that he regretted this thereafter, but in the same preface he claimed that the story of the novel was true and that he had had to wait until the real protagonists died before he could write it. This is almost certainly not the case, or at least not entirely the case; and if that part of the tale is not quite true, how true is the rest of it? This is, of course, exactly the kind of narrative game with which Ford was playing throughout the book itself.

The truth or otherwise of the novel's central story is today less significant than the skill of its telling. The shape and idea of the narrative, the use of the erratic narrator, the shifts in time – they had all been developing in Ford's mind for a

decade or so. The book was published in 1915. During the War itself Ford was gassed and suffered shell-shock, but afterwards he continued to write and edit, introducing more new writing and creating his four-volume novel *Parade's End*.

Ford has never been held in the same public regard as those whose work he supported and championed. However, he had a central role in literature's transition between the 19th and 20th centuries, and it is therefore fitting that at his death someone so much of the Modern as Ezra Pound should compare Ford to the greatest of the ancients.

Notes by Roy McMillan



Kerry Shale's stage credits include *His Girl Friday* (National Theatre), *Frost/Nixon* (West End) and six solo shows which he has performed in London, Berlin, Sydney and New York. His TV credits include *Not Going Out*, *Love Soup*, *Gideon's Daughter* and *10 Days To War*. Recent films include *Genova* and *Universal Soldier: A New Beginning*. He has won three Sony Radio Awards, the APA Award for Male Audio Book Performer (UK) and the Audie Award for Best Male Reader (USA).

Credits

Produced and edited by Malcolm Blackmoor
Recorded at Liberty Hall, New Barnet

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE, BROADCASTING
AND COPYING OF THESE COMPACT DISCS PROHIBITED.

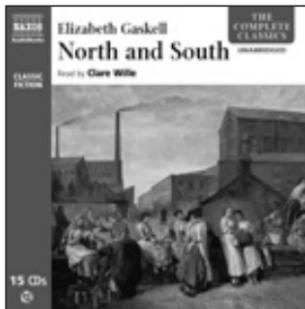
Cover picture: *Supper in Garden*, 1912; courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library

Other works on Naxos AudioBooks



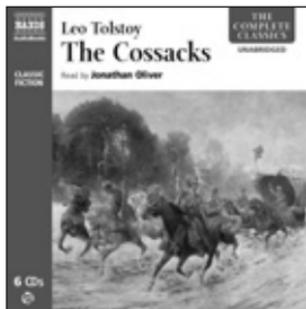
Bulldog Drummond

(Sapper) ISBN: 9789626341292
read by Roy McMillan



North and South

(Gaskell) ISBN: 9789626341858
read by Clare Wille



The Cossacks

(Tolstoy) ISBN: 9789626341315
read by Jonathan Oliver



Tender is the Night

(Scott Fitzgerald) ISBN: 9789626344576
read by Trevor White

Other works on Naxos AudioBooks



The Old Curiosity Shop

(Dickens) ISBN: 9789626348956
read by Anton Lesser



The Leopard

(Lampedusa) ISBN: 9789626349960
read by David Horovitch



The Master and Margarita

(Bulgakov) ISBN: 9789626349359
read by Julian Rhind-Tutt



Tristram Shandy

(Sterne) ISBN: 9789626349670
read by Anton Lesser

THE
COMPLETE
CLASSICS

UNABRIDGED

Produced by
Malcolm
Blackmoor

© 2010 Naxos
AudioBooks Ltd.
© 2010 Naxos
AudioBooks Ltd.
Made in Germany.

Ford Madox Ford

The Good Soldier

Read by **Kerry Shale**

Two couples, two marriages; both seemingly perfect, both falling apart.

Beneath the surface gentility of the American John Dowell with his wife Florence and the landed grace of Edward and Leonora lie fictions and deceit. There are secret desires, hidden power-games, suicides and madness. Everyone is hiding something; even the narrator can't be trusted.

Brilliantly inventive, tragic and ironic, *The Good Soldier* is one of the great novels of the 20th century.



Kerry Shale's stage credits include *His Girl Friday* (National Theatre) and *Frost/Nixon* (West End). His TV credits include *Not Going Out* and *Love Soup*. He has won three Sony Radio Awards, the APA Award for Male Audio Book Performer (UK) and the Audie Award for Best Male Reader (USA).

CD ISBN:
978-962-634-132-2

View our catalogue online at
www.naxosaudiobooks.com

NAXOS
AudioBooks

CLASSIC
FICTION
UNABRIDGED

Total time
7:59:09